

in Rockford. She has done everything from cleaning an ice rink with a Zamboni to trying her hand at beekeeping. And with every Cheri-on-Shift, she would ask her constituents: What do you need from me in Washington?

Just ask her staff. The answers to those questions made all the difference in Cheri's office.

Consider the case of a nurse in Galesburg who told Cheri she was so concerned about the lead pipes in her home that she was planning on dropping out of nursing school to cover the cost for replacing them. Cheri told her: We are going to do this right. And soon, she learned it wasn't just one nurse who was suffering from lead pipes, but the entire community.

So Cheri kept her promise to that nurse. She found the Federal and State dollars to help make things right in Galesburg.

If you want to see the difference that can be made, look at what Cheri has done for the Rock Island Arsenal. When I entered the Senate, the Rock Island Arsenal was on its last leg. I'm sorry to say, there were people at the Pentagon determined to close it. I was not going to let that happen, but I needed the right partner—and that partner was Cheri. Today, the Rock Island Arsenal's future is bright. We worked together with TAMMY DUCKWORTH to secure hundreds of millions of dollars in funding and projects to upgrade that facility.

In fact, the Rock Island Arsenal will soon be home to the largest 3-D printer in the world, which will build lighter, cheaper, and safer frames for military combat vehicles. It is one of the many ways that Cheri has helped position Illinois to lead in the future of manufacturing with union workers at the helm.

Justice and opportunity for all—that has been Cheri's passion since she was the little girl that I first saw at the Callahan dinner table. It is the passion that has defined her years in public service and her decade in Congress.

One of her final acts in Congress is one that will have impact across America for decades to come. She passed a law to end forced arbitration for sexual assault survivors. After she steered that bill through the House, I had the honor of working on it successfully as chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. This law will ensure that every survivor can have their day in court. And it wouldn't have happened without CHERI BUSTOS.

So it is sad for me that Cheri is leaving at the end of this term. It is worth noting that in returning home, she has remained true to those who sent her here. You see, Cheri is a strong believer in stepping out of your comfort zone. She says it is "where the magic happens." And it is a theme throughout her career. Every 10 years or so, Cheri switches gears—from journalism to healthcare to city council to Congress; and, now, I don't know what the next step will be.

I think I speak for every resident in Illinois's 17th district in saying: Cheri, we can't wait to see what you achieve next. My wife Loretta and I are amazed, but not one bit surprised, to see how far you have come. You see, we have trusted you for a long time—when you were a babysitter for our kids, the graduate of Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership, the IWIL Training Academy, to one of the most accomplished legislators and constituent advocates in the House of Representatives.

Somewhere out there, both Gene and Ann Callahan are beaming with pride with what their daughter has achieved.

I want to wish a wonderful holiday season to Cheri, her husband Gerry, her sister Lynn and her husband Al, her three kids, Tony, Nick, and Joey, and their daughters-in-law, as well as the grandkids. Now that you are retiring, I am sure you will have plenty of time for dancing to Stevie Wonder around the Christmas tree.

FDA

Mr. President, in July, the FDA Commissioner Robert Califf requested an external review of the Agency's food offices.

It was months after the infant formula crisis began, when a bacterial outbreak forced Abbott to shut down one of the largest formula facilities in the country and sent parents into a panic. Remember, this crisis could have been prevented by the FDA. FDA inspectors found several compliance issues at Abbott's Sturgis plant in September 2021. The Agency also received a complaint about that same exact facility in October 2021. But, they didn't ask Abbott to initiate a recall or warn the public until February 2022.

This wasn't the first time FDA has failed to prevent an outbreak though. This year alone, the FDA has opened more than 25 investigations into foodborne illness outbreaks. So I was glad when Dr. Califf recognized that the FDA has fallen short of its responsibility to protect Americans, and turned to the Reagan-Udall Foundation to conduct an external review. It was long overdue.

This month, the foundation completed its review. Its report concluded that the FDA's culture, structure, and lack of funding have undermined its effectiveness. The foundation found that, "there is no clear leader or decision-maker" in FDA's food offices, which tips the scales "in favor of inaction, minimizing risk, and maintaining the status quo."

Inaction, minimizing risk, and maintaining the status quo—Americans deserve so much more. They deserve the fundamental assurance that what they feed their families won't make them sick. That is exactly why the foundation concluded its report by calling on FDA and Congress to implement structural reforms. Specifically, one of the options the foundation recommends is that FDA to be separated into two agencies: the Federal Drug Administra-

tion and the Federal Food Administration. As it happens, I introduced legislation earlier this year with Congresswoman DeLAURO that would do just that: the Food Safety Administration Act.

The Reagan-Udall Foundation also encouraged Congress to take a close look at the FDA's funding and resources. Consider the fact that the FDA had just nine employees working in the infant formula office when the crisis hit. That is nine people overseeing a \$3.5 billion industry—absolutely unacceptable. We need to do better than that.

Commissioner Califf needs to act on the foundation's recommendations as soon as possible. We, in Congress, need to address this issue with the seriousness it deserves as well. All of us have family members, friends, and constituents who have fallen ill after a meal—or even died. Let's reform the FDA before the next crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

BROADBAND

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as a resident of a rural State, expanding rural broadband access has long been a priority of mine, and I am not the only one.

Over the years, Congress has dedicated significant resources to closing the digital divide, and that has been especially true over the past 3 years. Congress has appropriated a lot of money for broadband lately—"a lot" being \$79 billion, to be precise—dedicated solely to broadband-related projects—\$79 billion on top of the billions of dollars the Federal Communications Commission disburses annually under its Universal Service Fund. That is an unprecedented amount of money. In fact, with that much money, we ought to be able to deliver gold- and diamond-laced broadband to every household in the United States.

Appropriating money is not enough. We could throw trillions of dollars at the rural broadband problem and still not close the digital divide. All of the money in the world is useless if it is not being spent the right way. As I said, we have enough money now that we ought to be able to deploy gold- and diamond-laced broadband across the country, but I have serious questions about whether this money is actually going to meaningfully move us toward closing the digital divide. The money we currently have, as much as it is, is spread out over 15 separate Agencies and 133 programs—133 programs. To say that that is not conducive to a coherent rural broadband strategy would be an understatement.

Now, the lion's share of the funding does go through one Agency—the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA—but it is an Agency with a very poor record of efficiently disbursing broadband funding. The last time Congress provided NTIA with a big infusion of